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SUBJECT: BELGIUM COUNTRY CLEARANCE FOR CBP/ICE ROBERT ONTIVEROS

REF: FAX FROM PARIS/US CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION

1. Country clearance is granted for visit of Customs and Border Protection Chief Inspector Robert Ontiveros of El Paso, TX, to replace a Container Security Initiative (CSI) team member already stationed at the port, pursuant to the U.S. Customs and Belgian Customs Agreement on Implementing CSI. Country clearance is limited to 90 days unless Mr. Ontiveros arrives with the necessary Belgian visa in his passport.

2. Embassy Control Officer is Terri Robl, Economic Counselor who can be reached via the Embassy switchboard number 322-508-2111.

3. Embassy understands that no further assistance is requested for this visit. Nonetheless, Embassy would like to underscore the necessity of having the correct visa for an extended stay in Belgium. Please check with the Belgian Embassy in Washington in this respect. Also please schedule a security briefing with the RSO as soon as possible upon arrival.

4. Threat Assessment: A worldwide caution regarding the threat of transnational terrorism was issued by the Department of State. (Please consult the Department's web site for text: <http://travel.state.gov>). In light of this caution and the events of September 11, 2001, all visitors are encouraged to assess their security posture, and be alert to their surroundings. All visitors should exercise caution while traveling abroad as U.S. Citizens and facilities are often the target of groups demonstrating opposition to the U.S. foreign policy.

5. Belgium remains a relatively safe country but as a result of the war in Iraq, and sentiments expressed by its citizens against the war, American visitors are advised to exercise caution and avoid anti-American demonstrations. Also, it is prudent not to wear clothes or carry articles with logos and emblems associated with the United States at this time. By taking reasonable precautions, visitors should enjoy an uneventful stay.

However, purse snatching and pick pocketing is occurring more frequently. In Brussels, pick pocketing and purse snatching are prevalent in the metro system, (subway, bus tram), and at Brussels, three major train stations, the Gare du Nord (North Station), Gare Centrale (Central Station) and especially the Gare du Midi (South Station). Extra caution should be used at the Gare Centrale station. Victims have been asked for assistance by someone who appeared lost and anxious to catch their train. As the victim responds to the request, a third person appears and steals laptop computers, and other related travel items. According to the police, this is a new strategy by criminal gangs operating at central station. Apparently they prefer platforms 3 and 4, used by trains going to the airport and obviously carrying the best category of potential victims.

Valuables should never be left unattended in vehicles and car doors should always be kept locked when driving. Carry only a minimum amount of cash, credit cards and id. Expensive jewelry, financial records, address books and other personal effects should be left at home or stored in a safe place during your visit. The emergency numbers for the police and medical assistance are 101 and 100 respectively and for cellular phones (locally) 112. Visitors to Belgium requiring additional information should contact the Brussels Regional Security Office (322) 508-2370.

6. Computer and Electronics Usage: Inter-agency security standards prohibit the introduction or use of non-USG owned computer hardware and software at all USG diplomatic facilities. Cell phones, palm pilots, radios and other convenience electronics are prohibited in all secure areas of the mission.

Travelers who anticipate having special needs in terms of either access or computer usage should contact the RSO office before arriving at post.

7. Systems Access: If you are a DOS employee and would like to access Opennet during your visit (without taking the 30 minute systems security briefing), please bring confirmation that you have attended within the last year, the "security

awareness briefing on Opennet Plus." This can be a copy of the form you signed when you took the briefing, a signed memorandum from your systems administrator or ISSO, or an e-mail message from your systems administrator or ISSO to "Brussels E-Mail-DL" or brussjasisc@state.gov.

Schoonover